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CALIFORNIA

AND THE OPENING OF THE
GATEWAY BETWEEN THE
ATLANTIC *and* THE PACIFIC

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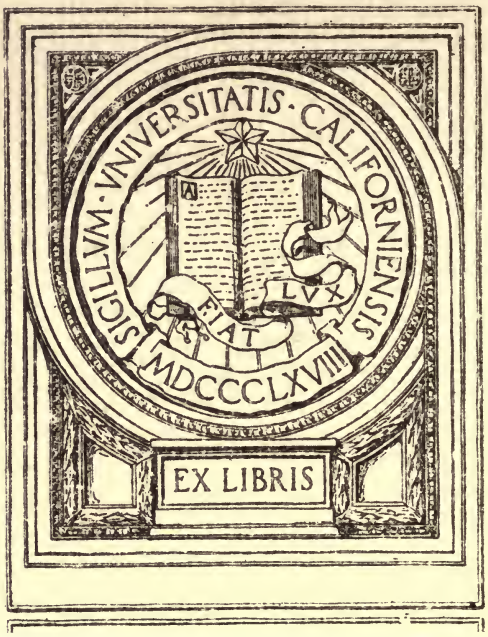

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CALIFORNIA

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AND
THE OPENING OF THE GATEWAY
BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC
AND THE PACIFIC

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE

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FOREWORD

The *New World* is naturally divided into two great *Peninsula's;* whereof that towards the North is called *Mexicana,* from *Mexico* the chief City and Province of it, supposed (for the most Northern parts of it are not yet discovered) to contain 13000 miles in compass. That towards the South hath the name of *Peruana,* from the great Countrey of *Peru;* the Circumnavigation whereof is reckoned to 17000 *Italian* miles. The *Isthmus* which joyneth these two together is very long, but narrow; in some places not above 12 miles from Sea to Sea, in many not above seventeen. By the *Spaniards* it is called the Streight of *Darien,* from a River of that name in *Peruana,* near unto the *Isthmus;* and is so small a Ligament for so great a Body, that some have thought of turning these two *Peninsula's* into perfect Islands. Certain it is, that many have motioned to the Council of *Spain,* the cutting of a navigable Chanel through this small *Isthmus;* so to shorten their common Voyages to *China* and the *Molucca's.* But the Kings of *Spain* have not hitherto attempted it; partly, because if he should employ the *Americans* in the work, he should lose those few of them which his people have suffered to live; partly, because the *Slaves* which they yearly buy out of *Africa* do but suffice for the Mines and Sugar-houses; but principally, lest the passage by the *Cape of good Hope* being left, those Seas might become a receptacle of Pirates. Which doubtless was a very prudent and

politick consideration. Many times I have read of the like attempts begun, but never of any finished. *Sesostris* King of *Ægypt*, *Darius* of *Persia*, one of the *Ptolomies*, and a late capricious *Portugal* had the like Plot, to make a passage from the Red Sea to the *Mediterranean*. So had *Cæsar*, *Caligula*, and *Nero*, Emperours of *Rome*, upon the *Corinthian Isthmus*. Another of the same nature had *Charles* the Great, to let the *Rhene* into the *Danow:* the like had *Lucius Verus*, to joyn the *Rhene* and the *Rhosne:* all which, in their peculiar places, we have already touched. *Nicanor* also, King of *Syria*, intended to have made a Chanel from the *Caspian* to the *Euxine* Sea, an infinite Project. But neither he nor any of the rest could finish these works: God, it seemeth, being not pleased at such proud and haughty Enterprises. And yet perhaps the want of Treasure hath not been the least cause why the like Projects have not proceeded.

—By Peter Heylyn, *From the* COSMOGRAPHY
Printed in LONDON, in the Year MDCLXXVII.

CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA

Part I.

A short curved line on yellow parchment traced
By monk in cloister. Reverently placed
To part the unknown land and untried sea
In darkness wrapped, shrouded in mystery,
Where he who sailed by way unknown before,
Nor came again from undiscovered shore,
Was down red vortex of the sunset drawn
Into the shadow land of dawn,
Or, from new lands returned, a thing divine
Had compassed for his sovereign.

A line
Marking where first, above the unsighted land,
Rested, low lying on the waves, a band
Of clouds and from the opal water rose,
Like shade its passing shadow darkening throws
On the pale sea, the faint shape floating dim
Ziménes saw upon the ocean's rim,—
Dream shore emerging misty from the blue
Of fading sky, scarce needing passage through
Or tangible enough to separate
The fabled waters of the unfound strait
Which seeking came Cortés,—the low Pearl Coast
New consecrated with the lifted Host.

An Island swimming in the purple seas,
Where passed the unfreighted argosies,

The cross of Santiago on each prow,
With swelling sails, to sink below
The new horizon line, or staggering rose
From the white foam, at the wild tempest's close,
The high built galleon.
Island whose bounds no chart has shown.
Luring still on beyond Antillia,
Beyond the Isles of Spice, by far
Strange waters, where, northwest, in splendor lay
The shining gold roofed temples of Cathay.

Coast line
Drawn tentative by skilled cartographer
On that uncharted sea where mariner
On high adventure sailed, on and still on,
Still westward sailed, his baffled quest upon,
With veering compass and with scurvied crew,
On sea of dark Columbus never knew;
Whose breaking surf rolled vanishing between
The unknown waters and the land unseen;
Where the shippes crept each stretching point around
And bore in their frail bottoms, outward bound,
The dreams of men.

A lengthening line piercing the unmapped blank
Of the unknown, where sail red-lighted, sank
In the engulfing waves and headland showed
Sudden and strange, out of white dawn. Where rode
The drifting barque on rock which breaker met,—
Terra Incognita, a barrier set.

Where men came blind, into each inlet groped,
The great adventurers, who dauntless hoped
Each winding channel and each shallow cove
The unfound way might prove.
Who saw in dreams, beyond each rounded cape
And phantom headland's mist-enshrouded shape,
What still the clinging fog bank might conceal
Or the swift breaking storm cloud yet reveal;
Deeming each shining silver reach might be
The long sought passage to the Northern Sea,—
Came all unguessing, to explore
The golden Islands on the Indies shore,
And on the western coast of the New World,
Spain's tattered flag unfurled,
Upon its farthest limits still to wait
For tidings of the undiscovered strait.

Vainly, as they, enticed, who eager sought
Cibola's Seven Cities, dreaming, thought
Their stores of silver and turquoise to find,
Or, desert range of amethyst behind,
The untrod path to greater India,
To Asia and Tartaria.
In slow procession over gray wastes wound,
When first dread fire-arms' sound
Broke the long silences and clank of mail
Through rocky defile, on dim Indian trail
Rang the shod hoof, and poisoned arrow sped
Where time cleft gorge and sunken river led;
To see, from the rain gullied mesa, grown
With gnarléd juniper and low piñon,

The terraced houses rising from the plain,—
A fair walled city, high, with towers, where fain
In rich content they would abide,—
Wistful, a new Granada, glorified,
Under a sky blue as the stones it bore
Upon the carven lintels of each door.

Or saw, thirst fevered, on some burning noon,
By painted waters of the dry lagoon,
Fainting and worn, with straining bloodshot eyes
From out of the hot sand in splendor rise
The city of their search, reflected high
Upon the reaches of the turquoise sky,
To watch the cloud built battlements, unwon,
Mocking dissolve and vanish in the sun.

More fortunate perchance it might have been,
Northward, to seek the Better Land unseen
Beyond dim summits, where the River rose,
Whose conquered fastnesses might still disclose
The treasure bearing mountains of Zaiton,
Tribute to yield for Castile and León;
Or enter in that Happier Land by way,
Leading to famed Cipango and Quinsay,
The Marqués of the Valley sought afar,
With armament, under the western star;
Where Spain's tried pilots came to prove
The secret of the Gulf, the head thereof,
Thinking, where strongest drew the sucking tide,
With separating waters to divide

A hemisphere,—who all unknowing fain
Would tear a continent in twain.

A charted coast, on the blank sheet, which grew
With strokes the bold map makers shaping drew,
Bearing with steady keel, up from the south,
From the Pearl Bay to the Red River's mouth;
First drafted by Francesco d'Ulloa
Proved by Alarcón, Pedro de Tovar;
Which, doubled, stretching up the outer shore
Through tangling islands, true, Cabrillo bore,—
Unfinished chart Ferrelo took up when it fell
Out of his dying hand at San Miguel,
And north, Vizcaino traced with curving lines
To harbour's stop rounding the Point of Pines.

A treasure island of the Spanish Mayne
Where close her anchored caravels have lain,—
Where lurked the black hull of the buccaneer,
Standing off shore, or covetous drawn near,
Plunder of silver heavy in its hold,
Tempted by spoil of amber and of gold
And ropes of pearls, dear bought, need were with death,
For Britain's virgin Queen Elizabeth.

Where yearly passed Spain's outbound galleon,
Flying the flags of Castile and León,
Swift borne upon the favoring monsoon
To the West Isles, where, in the crescent moon

Of March, the gathering junks on Indian seas
In winged squadrons came, wafted by breeze
Fragrant with scent of spice and sandalwood,
From tropic shores where treasure cities stood,
Bearing rich merchandises, precious goods.
Carvings of ivory, caskets of rare woods,—
Brocades of gold and silver, unspun silk
And gaudy parrots, falcons white as milk;
Preserves of ginger, spices, cinnamon seeds,—
Sapphires and rubies, jade and temple beads,
Red sandalwood and arrobas of musk,—
Until, rising from out the scented dusk,
The weighted sun gone down, soared the full moon
Faint swimming in pomegranate skies of June,
To light the treasure ship which heavy rode
On the outgoing tide, rich freight bestowed
In its frail hold.

The harbour left behind,
The sailors gave their white sails to the wind
Gaily, with sound of music on the deck
And beating long, baffled, a lonely speck
Upon the great gulph of the ocean,
Months after saw again fog shrouded, wan,
Cloud-like against the saffron eastern skies,
The far evasive headlands slowly rise,
Luring, with promise of some haven fair
Which on its peaceful waters safe might bear
Their barque. Harbour of refuge, port of call
Where once again the anchor chains might fall,
Giving good promise of some sheltered cove
With running waters and with oaken grove.

Dreaming perchance of unfound Anian,
The visioned passage never sailed by man,
Or countries where the Northern River led,
With fabled Gran Quivira near its head,
Unresting, worn, they found not harbour lost.
Nor Northwest Passage found, but tempest tossed,
Helpless, upon the stormy waters drift
Southward, where mountains towering skyward lift
Their snowy summits wrapt in clouds,
Whose evening purple ever veiling shrouds
The secret of the Northern Mystery.

So they who, toil worn, journeying to the west,
The wide encircling land to doubtful test
For sign the Narrow Sea lies close land locked,
Found still their sought-for entrance mocked
By tide which rolled in billows of sand
Between them, eager, and that Better Land,
While far beyond its bitter waters rose
The same cloud veiled Sierra of the Snows,
Blue as the whispering shell
From the South Sea, whose murmuring voices tell
Their rhythmic secret to the quickened ear,—
Sierra Azul, in vision seen more clear
By him who looked across those silent waves
Breaking on strand the tideless water laves,
First of the banished brotherhood,—
Who still outside its borders wistful stood
And yearning saw beyond the azure range
The fair and dreamèd land, its people strange.
At evening from the hill-top saw the reach

Of Cortés sea with its unbroken beach,
No strait of Anian, naught to divide
Save the full flooded Colorado's tide,
Proof of the land locked straits discovery.
Across the desert waste and sapphire sea
Beheld like an illumined map unfold,
All rich embossèd by the sunset's gold,
The many lands of California,
No circled island but peninsula.

And came he, that high dreamer sandal shod
Spoil of lost souls to garner safe for God;
On desert sea, as one intent to save
Walked once unsinking on Judea's wave,—
To fertile valleys and bright rivers came
On royal quest and conquest in His name,
And on the new land's threshold paused to note
The flower whose sweetness on his senses smote,
Plucked from the virgin land, its beauty quick to feel,
With tender hand, the roses of Castile.

So went he forth beyond the mountain's bar
To farthest coast of California
On the South Sea. He too undaunted sailed
The ethereal coast' along, where lookout failed
To sight the evasive shore, lost harbour know,
Sailed in the good ship San Antonio,
The phantom ship prayer-conjured from the deep
By those, in faith, despair's long vigils keep,
Whose sail rose white on eve of San José

And anchored in lost port of Monte Rey.
The risen cross he blessed whose shadow fell
Near the great oak, hung on its limbs the bell,
The Water sprinkled, beach and field to bless.
With holy rites, stately observances,
Before raised altar, in rich alb and stole,
Entreated guerdon of the heathen soul,
While the shippe's company all kneeling there
Chanted "Veni Creatur Spiritus"
Triumphant the "Te Deum Laudamus".

And they too, eager, through the young land came
Drawn by the potent magic of that name
Whose gold illumined letters fortune spelled,
The romance of its old time promise held,
In search of glittering treasure went
Across the untravelled continent.
By treeless plains to pale horizons wide,
Through the grim gap and down the long divide,
By gathering waters of its western slope.
Like Argonauts they came, full of brave hope,
Worn voyagers, who from hot wastes of alkali
Saw far Sierra peaks in the faint sky,
Floating like white sailed ships to bring them through
To the fair harbours of its cañons blue,
Where billowy foothills break in foam of flowers
On the bold headlands of the pine clad shores.

Drank bitter waters of the sunken streams
And gaunt and worn and fevered, dreamed their dreams.

As they who came across the enchanted land,
Under the turquoise sky and from the burning sand
Beyond the mirage waters saw again,
In dreams, their sky-hung battlements of Spain,
So these, plucking their tattered garments, came at noon
To mocking waters of the dry lagoon.
Slow staggering came, thinking their thirst to slake
Naked to lie them down nor dreaming wake.

Or tardy crossed high portals of the pass,
Under the avalanche's ice-combed mass,
In graven menace by the frosts breath hung,
Between the narrow gates death swung,
To find white graves below the beckoning peak;
Or pressing on, their nearing goal to seek,
Groped blindly on around the frozen lakes,
Down to the tumbling creeks which glittering flakes
Of covetous dreams bright flashing bear,
And through deep gulch and widening cañon tear.

By the steep game trail suddenly descend
Where fallen rests the painted rainbow end,
Marking in bloom under the sunlit skies
Where treasure pot of gold deep buried lies.
To follow where in unspoiled channel ran
The swift North Fork of the American,
Or tarry where from the unmelted snows
Ice cold Mokelumne's blue current flows,
Or pass, gold weighted, by the empty house
And unmanned ferry of the Stanislaus,

Where in thick willows to the river's brink
Fearless the hidden wild deer come to drink.
With lifted heads, scarce startled, listening stand
Leaving their footprints in the golden sand,
And bands of elk and antelope are seen
Scouring the broad plains of the San Joaqúin.

South where the rain swelled rivers run,
And poppies grow twice gilded by the sun,
And wild oats in the milk for the fat herds,
Where friendly lips shape unconveying words,—
On, where slow time the lengthening shadow tells
Or distant sounding of the mission bells,
Where night is heralded by brightening star
And tinkling music of light touched guitar,
The leagues of rancho ridden, lies before
The unasked welcome of its open door,
Where song floats out to quicken the still air
And red flower blows in braid of dusky hair.

Where the fiesta tempts to loitering
And at its friendly summons gathering,
From near and far, with hospitable count,
Come quaint ox cart and lagging pillioned mount,
And lithe vaquero ready with quick throw
Of coiled riata at the saddle-bow,
Bridle and bit with hand wrought silver bright;
The cowlèd priest and Indian neophyte.
Procession the green country side makes gay
Where runs the long Camino's lonely way,

Over rough rocks the infrequent hoofs scarce mark,
Shaded with live oaks through the level park,
Along the winding trails unhurried miles,
Where through the sun illumined aisles
Of yellow mustard up the rounded hill
The Caballero rides invisible,
Startling with tinkling of his silver spur
The singing birds which from its branches whirr.

Or by the friar host the guest God sped
Through corridor and thick hedged court is led
At morning down the bare trimmed vineyard rows,
Or olive shaded path of garden close,
Where shine the waters of Franciscan Bay
Beyond the walls of Mission San José.
And travelling on, before the evening, show,
The adobe bastions of Presidio,
Whose idle cannon guard the far off town,
Close wrapped in its gray hooded friar's gown
Of fog, which soft the tented heights enfold,
Until, sudden blown back, in cloth of gold
It stands new clad, the shining meshes spun
By the long needles of the bending sun.
As one in homely raiment long concealed
Drops her dull garment, stands revealed
In robe of state. Swift casts her vesture sad
And waits, splendid in regal garments clad,
To meet the ambassadors of Fate
Who come with rich gifts to her Golden Gate.

Part II.

Not false the presage, vain the age-long quest
For Orient treasure of the dreamèd West.
The gold which gilded dreams once more set free
The clogging wheels of the world's industry.
The riches of the yellowed harvest fields
Food for the hunger of the nations yields.
And more than ministers to bodies ease,
She gives, that dreamland of the centuries,
Still offering beyond the bread and wine,—
Fruit of the olive and the vine,
Drink for the thirst unquenched, food for desire,—
The flame new kindled in the spent sun's fire;
Eternal greed the unseized prize to win.
Still holding out her lure of promise in
Fruition,—dreams fulfilled still touched with light
Of dreams.

Once more her distant shores invite,
In poignant loveliness her soft hills lie
Dissolving in pale depths of sunlit sky.
Illusive still, the lights and shadows play
Over their rolling crests of olive gray.
The creeping mists still vanishing disclose
The evening tints of amethyst and rose
And shining strip of sea, in vision seen,
Where history's fadeless pageantry has been.

In February—when the land shall wake
Refreshed from its long sleep,—when rain-clouds break,

And, quickening, the swelling buds shall burst
Their sheaths. When stream by rock and boulder pours
And the pale gleaming boles of sycamores
Wind down the cañons to the lapping waves
Of beaches which the shining pebble paves,—
With long arms, throw their tender veil of green
Across blue deeps the weaving branches screen,—
Through alder thickets where the wild doves call,
Down from the hills of blossomed chaparral,
Blue grey like the low hanging smoke
Of votive Indian fires rain would invoke
From the ungathered clouds,—unrisen incense still
And sweet with aromatic scent of hill
And salt of sea.
Across the Robles Pass
Where, in shifting bed, the treacherous Salinas,
Over the sands with loosened coil outflung,
Trails shining through its willows catkin hung.

In February—when the clinging mists hang low
And through the fog the sand-dunes gleaming show,
A phantom land, dream-haunted by the past.
Land of desire! A resting shadow cast
On the pale sea, where the mock billows surge,
And, from the lifting fog banks, dark emerge
The wind-blown cypresses of Monterey
And shadowy outlines of the long sought bay,
While from the lonely tower of Carmel
Sounds faint the echo of old Spanish bell.

Beyond the Pajaro
By calling streams, through laughing valleys go,
Thick grown with poppies yellow in the sun
And green wild oats where soft the shadows run;
By roads where live oaks throw their shadows dark
And rain wet fields where sings the meadow lark,
Through pastures where uncounted cattle feed,
North, where her fairest valleys lead
To stretching waters beautiful as when
The hunters came, Ortega and his men,
And saw from low green hills the wild flowers paint
The unfound harbour of Assisi's saint.

So once again does California sing
Her siren song, spell of enchantment fling
As when the New World was. When unguessed truth
Was miracle, and, in her fadeless youth,
Fresh with the hope of the expectant centuries,
Clothed in the veiling of Time's mysteries,
Lovely as where the white mist sun-touched curls
She rose from blue gulf with her dower of pearls;

All garlanded with winter roses waits,
Within the portals of her harbours' gates,
On that west sea Balboa sighted when
He careless climbed the ridge of Darien,
His Indian guides outstripped, and, with arrested glance,
Pausing, looked off upon its dim expanse
Speechless for an immortal moment there.
That unnamed sea Magellan called Pacific, where

No misfortune was of wind or tempest,
Flowing to purple Islands of the West
Where treasure of the golden Indies teems,—
That sea whose spoils were dreams.

Entered at last by Isthmian water-way
Three centuries have visioned, to Cathay.
Wide to the other Mayne Sea open thrown.
Where sailed the galleon,
Dropping the new horizon line below,
The stately ships in fair procession go,
White through the mist, over the azure sea,
Unchallengèd by gun of enemy,
Unbarred by ice, by fevered land unbarred,
Their painted hulls by shot and shell unscarred,
Strung out like albatross in an unguarded line
Like great white water fowl which wing the brine,
In glad migration to some winter home,
Cruiser and battleship, in peace they come.

To that fair favored land sighted at last,
Upon whose southern shores the palm trees cast
Their swaying shadows on the purple seas
And on gray hills the Spanish bayonet
White flags upon a staff for truce are set.
Borne swiftly on, heedless of calm or breeze,
To northern coast, where giant redwood trees
Their long watch of the ages keep,
Between the snows eternal and the mighty deep,
Standing, earth's oldest living witnesses,

Not silent as the Sphynx or motionless
As she, doomed in the drifted sands to sink,
Taste the green earth and of the rain drop drink.
Defying death, decay, they throw
Their swaying branches to the winds which blow.
The wild rain wind out of the southwest whips
Their time-ringed trunks in vain, smites their live lips,
Dumb to the secrets of the years which roll
Over their unbowed heads nor take death's toll.

Beyond the Half Moon Bay, Fort Point around,
With dipping flag to meet the ship outbound,
Unchallenged through the gun-flanked gateway pass.
Sudden the sun illumines Alcatraz
And Tamalpais from her heights looks down
On winding leafy cañons, laurel grown,
And crests where shrub of manzanita grows
Thick blossoming in hues of dawn's faint rose.
Within that noble harbour, stretching wide
To gather in the nations' fleets, they ride.

Haven of refuge, port of call
Where safe in land locked waters anchors fall!
Whose quiet shelter storm-tossed barque invites.
There flash the signals of its guiding lights,
There gleams the Pharos of its jewelled tower
Above the arch of man's triumphal hour.
There rise the bubble domes fresh blown
By fancy, all unpricked by time. Unknown
Quivira, where the dreamlight fadeless falls,—

The fabled city with its storied walls,
Receding ever from the search, again
Is hung with borrowed heraldry of Spain.
There swims the fleet of merchantmen which bears
To the long wharves spoil of unvalued wares
Treasure hard won on deathless battle grounds.
The gun of evening sounds.
On the red sails the sunset's fire burns
The still flame-lighted sea to crimson turns
Gay banners from the battlements are hung
And answering pennants to the breeze are flung.

So once again does California call,
Glad invitation gives to festival,—
The world invites to celebrate
The passage of the newly opened strait.
Bids men to keep triumphant jubilee
Which marks the kinship of humanity;
Her Golden Gate wide open set
For the world's armament in glad truce met,
Her valley vestibules fresh strewn
With petals of the almond bloom. Fair hewn
Her pleasure house. Within its sculptured walls,
Illumined courts, and stately halls,
Her feast is spread purple with fruit of olive
And of vine. Her welcoming word to give,
The nations of the girdled earth to greet,
She stands the shining waters at her feet
And in her hands the bay. The scent of eastern seas
Is wafted from her wind blown draperies.

So waits she there, in festal state, to meet
The coming of the nations mergèd fleet,—
Summons to council high around her board.
Waits to award
Fresh laurel crowns to those who struggling wrest
The victors honours. For high prize contest,
Where, in unending strivings, vie
The evolving forces of humanity.
With iron cross of peace, to decorate;
The deed of valor to commemorate,—
Courage that scourge and pestilence will brave
The doomèd human life to save.
Waits to write down upon her parchment scroll
The deathless words,—to call the roll
Of those whose names shall be inscribed
With the Immortals.

Symbolic feast, a lavish banquet spread,
From the rich stores of knowledge garnerèd
In the unhurried years of frugal peace
Which make for plenty, to high toil release;
With fruit slow mellowed in its sunny years,
Untainted by the wet of woman's tears,
Pomegranate seeds which taste of pleasant earth
Its tender cares, its labor and its mirth.
Drink quaffed from faith's old chalice shaped anew
On Time's slow wheel, studded with sapphires blue
Of higher spheres than arch philosophy,
Sustenance for the spirit, tried, to give
The soul which fainting yet would deathless live.
The burning draught of inspiration's wine

Raised to the thirsting lips,—the drink divine
More frenzying than any crushed from grape
With thronging forms eternal hope gives shape.
Where rises, clear, music's unvisioned flight,
Which yearning goes beyond the realms of sight,
And hovers all the loveliness of art
Light winged like joy, brief poisèd to depart.

Banquet prepared large commerce to promote
In costly stuffs more splendid than the boat
Of Tyre had traffic in. Untariffed wares
Richer than the white dromedary bears
From Orient, in the long caravan slow borne,
Stuffs thick embroidered on old thread unworn,
Unfading with the stain of priceless dyes,
Silk woven into pictured tapestries
By patient weaver on the old hand loom.
So weaves the thinker in the quiet room,
Slow spinning from his fecund brain,
As spider spins, where naught but dust has lain,
All substanceless the glistening web of thought,
Fabric more rare than Syrian has wrought.

Where research shows for graven form uncouth
Patterned mosaic of the eternal truth,
Its fragments sifted from the ages dust,
And treasured with the scholar's noble lust,
Each broken piece with careful study matched
Imperfect edge with patient cunning patched,
Until from broken bits of proven fact

Slowly at last, significant, intact,
Comes out the semblance of the pictured whole,
As from the worthless clay looks out the soul.

Where quick invention makes with costly fee
Tenders of service to humanity,
Device ingenious, weary need to foil,
Prove labor less, lighten the hours of toil.
And science brings its princely gift
The heavy weight of man's despair to lift,—
The germ infection fights, conquers disease,
The drug which deadens pain, makes anguish ease.
The slowing breath,
In guise of sleep gives boon of quiet death.

The silent message sent to summon aid
Over wide oceans where ships unafraid
Pass to and fro. Secrets, unsolved and deep,
Which the enslavèd elements still keep;
Unproven properties of electricity
More baffling than the Northern Mystery.

Banquet arranged with upper seats assigned
Those whose largess the nations closer bind,
To take account of high distinction won
And drink the toast to enterprise begun,—
To those adventurers who would explore
The untrodden path, the way unknown before,
As they who, in strength's very wantonness,

Knowing no fear, no boundaries confess,
Would seek the conquest of the uncharted sky,
The deep too safe, would through blue ether fly
Beyond the sunset's gilded bars,
To look with level gaze upon the unveiled stars.
Bold mariners who sail the realms of space,
To the far heavens soar, new perils face,
As Spain's old pilots sailed the unknown brine
Sinking below the new horizon line.
Wasteful of life, eager and bold as they
Who in their quest dropped heedless a lost day.

So stands she holding in her outstretched hands
Fresh laurel crowns, so waiting stands.
By sea and land they come, come at her call.
Is that the glad salute she listens for, signal
Of anchors in the quiet waters dropped,
Of throbbing engines stopped,
Which sudden the expectant stillness breaks,
The wide and multiplying echo wakes!
Was that the shock of the stupendous blast
With mighty force struck open at the last
The severing rock, and with the waters rent
The undivided continent,
While at the sound of the awaited stroke
The answering cannon of the nations spoke!

No dreamers these,
Lulled by the lapping of the new linked seas.
No peaceful salvo that which sounds afar

Beyond the eastern gates of Panama.
No tropic storm the signal flash has made
For the long thunder of the cannonade.

As one from slumber rudely waked she sights
The warships prowling dark with shrouded lights
Deep burning in their sockets. Gaunt and gray,
Like hungry wolves who famished seek their prey,
To friendly signal dark, mute
To the enquiring merchant crafts salute,
As over the dark furrowed seas they steal,
All menacing and swift, with silent keel,
The red tongued pack to voice.

With straining ears
Scarce credulous, far off, she hears
In Belgian fields the German gunner ploughs,
The sweep of that dread scythe which mows
Quick sprouted harvest. Where already walks
The veiled and awful reaper, and where for the lean stalks,
Their aftermath, the bending women go
Patient to lift the burden of their woe.

Listens to hear, with sharp suspended breath,
The gay French bugles summoning to death;
Down from White Russia, tramp of countless feet,
And gathering of England's battle fleet;
In newer world, the mingled blood of Spain
And those for whom the martyrs, all in vain,

Spent life to give their Gentile souls new birth,
Poured dripping out upon the untilled earth;
While stealthy wind across the Eastern Seas
Stirs the still tops of the mulberry trees.

So startled, motionless, she listening stands,
The laurel dropping from her heedless hands
The immortal scroll forgot.
Siren no more
Stretching white arms from charmèd islands shore,
With low song, to the seas adventurer,—
With beckoning hand would lavish gift confer.
Not California with her lure of old,
Beside her undug rainbow pot of gold,
Who, with bright promise of unfading hope,
Spanned the Sierras' desert-guarded slope;
Through its white glistening portals, rainbow arched,
To death, whose wooers willing marched.

California, a very human maid,
In many tinted gala robes arrayed,
With winter roses drooping in her hair,
Stands by her shrunken festal board. Scarce shall she dare
The saddened feast begun, banner to fling
In courtesy, or nations anthem sing
For thought of strife. Or feast at banquet spread
For haunting of gaunt faces conjurèd
And huddled forms with tattered clothing scant,
For voices faint with hunger and with want,—
Those whom such plenty to remembrance bring

All shelterless and homeless wandering,
Sorrow no strain of joy can lull.

So stands she a still moment sorrowful,
Pondering word of those who must with death carouse,
Who stay to sup within a charnel house.
Full busy they who minister to pain
Where crawl the wounded from the heaps of slain,
Where, day and night, the battles' thunders roll
And Science schemes to multiply its toll.
Where boat rides safe the charted sea above
To plant a mine or port to dragging prove,
And deadly submarine, the waves below,
Creeping invisible, would sting its foe.
Where soundless speech is sent to compass death
And flames burst out fanned by the night winds' breath
And they, bold mariners, who in their flight
Breast the soft billows of incoming night,
Mounting with rudder set by the eternal stars
To silent space beyond the sound of wars,
Circle like evil birds to drop a bomb.
As vulture seeks its prey, low swooping to entomb
Their helpless victims in safe walls of home,
Dark, sinister and still, they flitting come.

So listening, she waits, as one who hears
The steps of him who some dread message bears,
The far off beating of the muffled drums,—
To greet the guest who all unbidden comes.
Was ever festival so heralded,

Haunted with ghosts of the unshriven dead
And moans of those who toss on anguished bed,—
With prophecy of misery and woe
For them who life's full bitterness shall know!

So hears the stricken world, aghast and pitiful,
Sated with horror, to its meaning dull,
The bloody tidings to its confines borne.
Not so for her to mourn!
Not the poor body mangled, tortured, torn.
For her to mourn
That which shall quench the kindled spirit's flame,
Shall close the eager lips parted to frame
Its speech. Lips stiffened, sealed.
Message inspired, forever unrevealed.
Hers to lament, not for the body slain,
For the long brooding brain
Which lifts earth's joys, finds lethe for its pain.
The tense drawn spirit to fine issues strung
Like bent bow slackened, dropped. The song unsung,
The lovely things of fancy numbed with toil.
The ungarnered thought, the ruthless battles' spoil.
The future mortgaged to the baser use,—
That which once killed no labor shall induce.
Not him alone the long task has achieved;
Who dies unlistened to and unbelieved,
Unproved, with undelivered message sent,
Who all unheard has tuned his instrument
Keyed to immortal strains.
Not those whose tasks are done,
But him just stripped, ready the race to run.

Not those with wreathed immortelles carried to the tomb,—
The unborn victor of the barren womb.
Wives desolate, mothers who were to be,
Maids who shall keep their sad virginity.

When wide was flung the awful battle line
More was crushed out than juices of the vine!
In fair fields trodden now by marching feet
More was struck down than the ungathered wheat!
Who thick along the cannon-wasted fields
In sad trench, plant the seeds no fruitage yields,
Sprout not again in summer through the earth,
Once gathered in, no more have birth,
See perishing, unheeded, that which slain
In all the coming years lives not again!
Through gaping windows of abandoned homes
Its dreamers stretched on beds where no dream comes.

For her who pauses on the final strand
The utmost limits of that farthest land,
Ultimate goal where migrant man must rest,—
Where his long seeking ends, still looking to the west
Where the sunk planets quench their light to rise
Out of the eastern seas in dawn lit skies;
For her, in aspect sinister, to scan
The unread horoscope of man.
Facing that East of vassalage and war,
Whence went the Wise Men following the star
The herders saw, in the night watches kept
In quiet fields, while flocks safe-folded slept,

The star which heralded the birth
Of the great Nazarene of peace on earth,
Tidings of joy, bringing good will to man,
In nineteen centuries two oceans span
Until they come into the east again
The futile tidings martyr borne in vain.
That sought-for land, goal of an age long quest,
In meekness and in courtesy possessed,
On the Pacific sea which washes West
And East.
Where the long furrow of Magellan's keel
Was drawn like impress of the marriage seal
A ringed symbol round the circled globe
To fringing Isles of Asia's golden robe.

Vainly as East to West comes West to East
To celebrate the Pentecostal Feast
Of vision and of prophecy,—the end
Of hate. When harmless the unscathing flames descend
And word untaught to alien ear shall reach
And comprehending voice a stranger speech.
Divided still the groping nations wait
Separate, apart, as for some visioned strait
Which, all unfound, to the Blest Isles may lead
Beyond the bounds of passion and of greed.

Shaper of visions, giver of fair dreams,
In dumbness of all prophecy who seems
To front the future waiting for a sign,
As one who seeks in carnage some divine

Significance, some portent would evoke.
As though foreboding lest the stroke
Which cleft the barrier of the parted seas
Had rent the purple of old mysteries;
Who hears the swinging of forbidden gate
On shrieking hinge, the outcome must await.
As one who wakes, in slumber borne
Through gate of ivory or gate of horn
To the new day, to see from brine to brine,
The curved and burnished line
Of white, which cleaves the hemisphere,
Shine like an unsheathed scimitar.

Seer,
Sibyl, prophetess, who seeks to read
The mystic meaning of the human deed,
The Sphynx like riddle of the human fate
Whose age old evolution ends in hate,
Of progress which forever must attain
Its highest ends at bitter cost of pain,
Who would locate and reach the final goal
To restless seeking of the human soul,
Confronts a subtler, deeper mystery,
Ponders more difficult anomaly,
Than he first sailed flat earth around.
Anomaly perplexed, riddle profound,
Whose still unspoken answer who shall guess,
What voyager, what prophetess!

Who shall read true, who demonstrate in strife
Proof of the something dearer yet than life,—

The slaughter pitiless which seems to prove
The eternal mastery of love.
In brutal struggle, to remonstrance mute,
Purpose which raises man above the brute,
Caught helpless in war's pitiless hard mesh,
Triumph of spirit over flesh.
Soldiers who in uncounted legions come
For the defense of country and of home.
Millions of youth who willing bring
In their strong hands the utmost offering,
Which recognition claims too deep for tears,
The free gift of life's unlived years.
As each one of a million heroes dies
Shines out the splendor of such sacrifice.
As burning star drops bright against the night
To quench its flame in dark, so flames each white
And burning soul to death's black awful rim.
Heroic courage horror cannot dim!

Under the skies a solemn figure stands,
Muffled in darkness, on the twilight sands,
Looking with strained far gazing eyes
Over the fog hung waters, where yet lies,
Slow foundering, the red hulk of the sun
Like burning ship engulfed, its last cruise done.
Form clothed in mystic purple of the seas,
Shrouded in garment of night's mysteries,
Now lost in shadows, hidden from the sight,
Now lit by splendors of the kindled light
Of artificial stars, whose rays swift move
Across the black, while on the heights above,

In the thronged streets, before night's revelry begins,
Flash out war's awful bulletins.
Wrapt, still, as one in vision brought
To the far regions of remotest thought
She seems, the questioner of human fate,
As though its shrouding veil to penetrate,
To catch in night some promise of the dawn.

Curtain of darkness evermore undrawn
No chord of earthly twining may roll back
The darkened masses of that dread cloud wrack.
No earthly messenger has power to reveal
The missives contents, break the God wrought seal.
Waits buried no unfound Rosetta Stone
Sure key to scriptures, pictographs unknown,
To translate in the dearth of witnesses
The awful page spread open to man's guess.
No deity implored, by votary sought,
With offering of smoking entrails brought,
Speaks in the hollow shrine,
Gives utterance to oracle divine.
No voice of prophet bids the shades disperse
To bare the eternal secrets of the universe.

Expectancy made naught, he who despairs
Must wait fulfillment which all time declares,
Which earth's slow ordered processes attest,
The heavens and the earth make manifest.
In man's extremity, must summon to his aid
Thought of that One the firmament who made,

Who saw the myriad forms of his creation press
From out the womb of nothingness.
Must turn to Him who, in the void of space,
A spirit moved upon the waters' face.
Who first the soundless message sent
To part the waters of the firmament,
Who separated darkness from the light,
His watch lights burning set through day and night.
In the beginning, by his still command.
Dim waters severed with the misty land.

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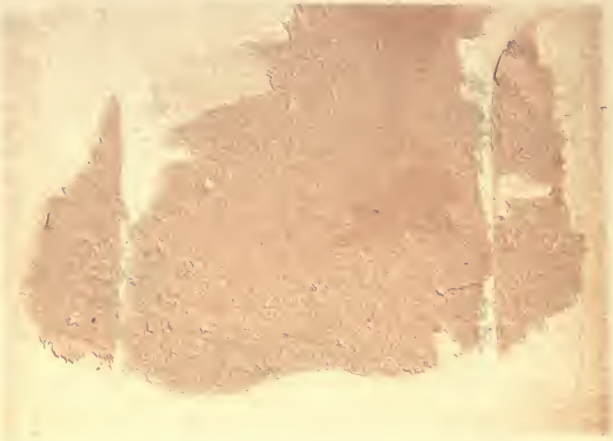
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